

Thuringia – a pleasant surprise.

# Thuringia – a pleasant surprise.

50 interesting facts that everyone should know.

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Dear Readers,

‘Where the future is born’ is the guiding principle and central theme we use to describe the state of Thuringia, and the following 50 stories from and about Thuringia bear testament to this fact. But these represent only a fragment of the state’s past, present and potential.

Thuringia’s history is full of surprises, impressive facts, forward-looking innovations and entertainment. There are plenty of anecdotes and stories which you won’t find in the history books – but they really should be told.

It’s all about ideas big and small as well as events which have brought about major changes both in Thuringia and beyond. They form a foundation for the state’s endless potential.

This booklet talks about a pioneering and inventive spirit,

bravery, new ideas and innovations, all of which have the power to effect change and make Thuringia a unique and proud state. After all, you can only win over others if you know your own story and are confident in your strengths.

I would like to share these stories with you, as together they form an overall impression: Thuringia is where the future is born. Why not find out for yourself?

I hope you enjoy reading the articles.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'M' followed by a cursive 'a' and 'c'.

Matthias Machnig, Thuringian Minister for Economy, Labour and Technology

Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.







Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.

## The Brooklyn Bridge – a New York icon designed by a true Thuringian.

The Brooklyn Bridge is a New York icon and one of the most famous bridges in the world. Less well known, however, is that it was designed by a Thuringian architect and engineer. Born as Johann August Röbling in Mühlhausen, John August Röbling emigrated to the US as a young man, initially making a living as a farmer before finding work with a railway company. Later, the engineer demonstrated just how suitable steel cables are for building bridges and founded the first steel cable factory in the US. In the early 1850s, he built a suspension bridge not far from Niagara Falls. Based on his experience, he suggested building a similar bridge over the East River in 1857. The mayors of New York and Brooklyn, which at that time were still independent cities, were less than enthusiastic and it took a great deal of persuasion to acquire the funds and government approval necessary for construction. Röbling was finally able to begin construction in June 1869 but did not live to see the grand opening in 1883. Just a few weeks after construction had begun, the engineer injured his foot while conducting surveying work and, following amputation, died of blood poisoning. His son oversaw construction to the end. Today, this genius from Mühlhausen is commemorated by the John A. Roebling Park in New York and the Johann-August-Röbling-Schule in his home town.





Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.



### Cars made in Eisenach.

Daimler, Benz and Opel – many Germans associate these names with early automotive history. A fourth important name is known only to aficionados: industrialist Heinrich Ehrhardt founded the Eisenach AG car factory in 1896, which initially only manufactured bicycles and military vehicles before launching the Wartburg motor car in 1898. Heinrich Ehrhardt was the third car manufacturer in Germany, after Gottlieb Daimler and Carl Benz. The Opel company was the fourth to join the ranks, just before the turn of the century.

One car manufactured in Eisenach is a particular favourite among classic car enthusiasts: the Dixi brand made a name for itself between 1904 and 1929, at which time BMW took over the Eisenach factory. The Wartburg, on the other hand, is reminiscent of something else: along with the Trabi, it dominated the roads of East Germany. In operation since 1990, Adam Opel AG in Eisenach was named Europe's most productive car manufacturing facilities in 1996 by British economic analysts.



### Carl Zeiss: the epitome of innovation.

Born in Weimar, Carl Zeiss was an expert craftsman who produced simple microscopes from 1846 at his workshop in Jena. However, he felt the production methods used at that time were underdeveloped and thus persuaded Ernst Abbe to carry out research on his behalf. Collaboration with mathematicians and physicists led to the establishment of Carl Zeiss AG, which is world-renowned to this day. From 1872, scientific calculations were used to develop the framework for future production processes, and the optical features of the microscopes produced in Jena far outperformed those of the competition. In the late 1880s, Abbe and his engineers began expanding the product portfolio with products such as optical measurement devices and binoculars. In 1890, the company launched the first photo lens onto the market. Today, Carl Zeiss AG is based in Oberkochen, Baden-Württemberg. The Jena facilities focus on microscopy, planetarium equipment, areas of the semiconductor industry and medicine technology, and are responsible for international bestsellers such as the IOL Master®, a system for non-contact measurement of the crystalline lens.



Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.

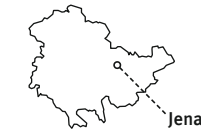
### The father of the kindergarten.

There is a Fröbel museum in Bad Blankenburg, and a Fröbel trail that leads from the museum to the surrounding rolling hills. But who was this Friedrich Fröbel? Born the son of a pastor in the Thuringian Forest, he was a visionary: almost 200 years ago, he recognised the importance of early childhood and a happy, functional family. He dedicated himself to promoting children's rights to a healthy upbringing and established a nursery in which they could learn and play in Blankenburg. In 1840, he coined the term 'kindergarten', the equivalent of a nursery. Translated into English, 'kindergarten' means 'garden for children' and Fröbel wanted to create a nursery in which children would be able to observe and live in harmony with nature, develop in an atmosphere of freedom and unleash their creative potential. But above all, he felt that children should be able to be children. Fröbel's goal was to promote a sense of responsibility, and kindergarten was the first step towards achieving this. Fröbel – who is considered to be a pioneer in progressive education – developed a concept which has since spread across the globe. Some countries, including Great Britain, have even adopted the term 'kindergarten' into their own languages.



### Mankind decoded.

The human genome comprises three billion components and its full sequence was finally mapped in 2003. It may not sound like much to the layman but, in the scientific world, the international human genome project is considered to be one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken in life sciences. Altogether 20 research institutes around the world were involved in decoding the human genome. One of these was in Jena, where researchers celebrated a major breakthrough in 2000: in collaboration with colleagues in Germany and Japan, they were the first to analyse the entire chromosome 21, increasing the chances of some day developing therapies to counteract the gene mutation, trisomy 21, better known as Down's syndrome. With Jena's contribution, the genome project experienced another milestone five years later: researchers decoded the X chromosome, the gender chromosome shared by men and women. This was a major achievement, as the X chromosome suffers from numerous defects. Many genetic diseases can now be researched more thoroughly.







Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.

## Cutting-edge technology. Maintained in Thuringia. N3 Engine Overhaul Services.

The city of Arnstadt – where modern technology is maintained. Since 2007, N3 Engine Overhaul Services has been overhauling and repairing aeroplane engines at the Erfurter Kreuz industrial estate located near the Arnstadt city gates. The joint venture of Lufthansa Technik AG and Rolls-Royce plc is one of the world's most modern servicing companies. The facilities feature the latest equipment and systems, including an engine assembly and dismantling area, component repair workshops and an engine test bench. N3 Engine Overhaul Services is Europe's only engine maintenance company responsible for overhauling Rolls-Royce engines, including the Trent 500, Trent 700 and Trent 900, which are used in the Airbus models A340, A330 and A380.

Its customers include airlines in Europe, the Americas, Africa and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The company currently has 430 highly qualified employees. In order to maintain high quality standards over the long term, N3 Engine Overhaul Services invests in future generations of employees and trains specialists for new challenges in-house. Incidentally, the name N3 was inspired by the three-spool construction found in the Rolls-Royce Trent engines. Each of the spools rotates at a different speed.



## Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.

### High tech made from glass.

Jena embodies a pioneering spirit like almost no other city in Germany. Optical and other technologies have their roots here and share close ties with cutting-edge glass technology. Today, Jena is referred to as ‘Optical Valley’ – and for good reason, as it is one of Germany’s hubs for optics and photonics. Chemist and glass technologist Otto Schott (1851–1935) invented a new lithium-based glass in his father’s cellar laboratory, which played a key role in the development of different types of glass with entirely new optical characteristics. Through scientific correspondence, Schott got to know Ernst Abbe, who worked as a professor in Jena and co-managed the Carl Zeiss company. Along with Carl Zeiss and others, the two of them established Glastechnische Laboratorium Schott & Genossen in 1876, which later became Jenaer Glaswerk Schott & Gen. Here they developed Jenaer Glas, a truly unique borosilicate glass which is resistant to heat and chemicals and hardly expands. The economic breakthrough came with the development of lighting glass for gas and petroleum lamps and, to this day, Jenaer Glas is still highly valued in kitchens.

This special glass is also used, for example, in the fields of biotechnology, space exploration, microsystem technology and fire protection.



### From knick-knacks to measurement devices.

Incorporating a good idea into everyday application requires good business sense – and that is exactly what Franz Ferdinand Greiner had. Born in Stützerbach, he owned a mill in the Ilm-Kreis district and was the first to introduce a mass-produced thermometer onto the market. He was trained in lampworking and around 1830 built a glass-blowing shop in his father’s watermill, where he primarily produced knick-knacks. However, one evening Greiner observed Wilhelm Berkes, one of his employees, blowing some leftover glass into a tube with a bulbous end. He filled the tube with a liquid that expands when heated. In the object, Greiner saw a thermometer and decided to expand his product portfolio. Together the two men perfected the thermometer – for example, by opting for mercury – making Greiner the first manufacturer to mass-produce thermometers. Since 2009, thermometers may no longer contain harmful mercury in the EU. However, manufacturer of medical measurement devices Geratherm Medical AG, which has carried on Greiner’s vision in Geschwenda, was prepared and now produces mercury-free thermometers among other things.



RIESENPINGUIN

### The animal kingdom explained.

Born in Unterrenthendorf in 1829, Alfred Edmund Brehm developed an interest in the animal kingdom as a child. Nonetheless, he opted to study architecture. But when Johann Wilhelm von Müller, a bird researcher, invited him on an African expedition, Brehm terminated his studies. For five years, he observed and taxidermically prepared animals he came across in locations such as Egypt and the Sudan. The young traveller was also interested in the people of the regions. He described their customs and was appalled by the slavery. However, he also approved of the colonists’ efforts to bring civilisation to the ‘savages’. After he returned, Brehm studied natural sciences in Jena. He wrote about other expeditions in essays and primarily in his longest and best-known work, Brehm’s Life of Animals, which shaped generations and is still known to many Germans today. The ongoing success of this encyclopaedia is chiefly based on its vivid, exciting descriptions. Brehm did not see animals as soulless eating machines, but as creatures with their very own characters. His work even caught the eye of expert Charles Darwin, who took it upon himself to have it translated into English.







Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.

### Bauhaus – an idea captures the world.

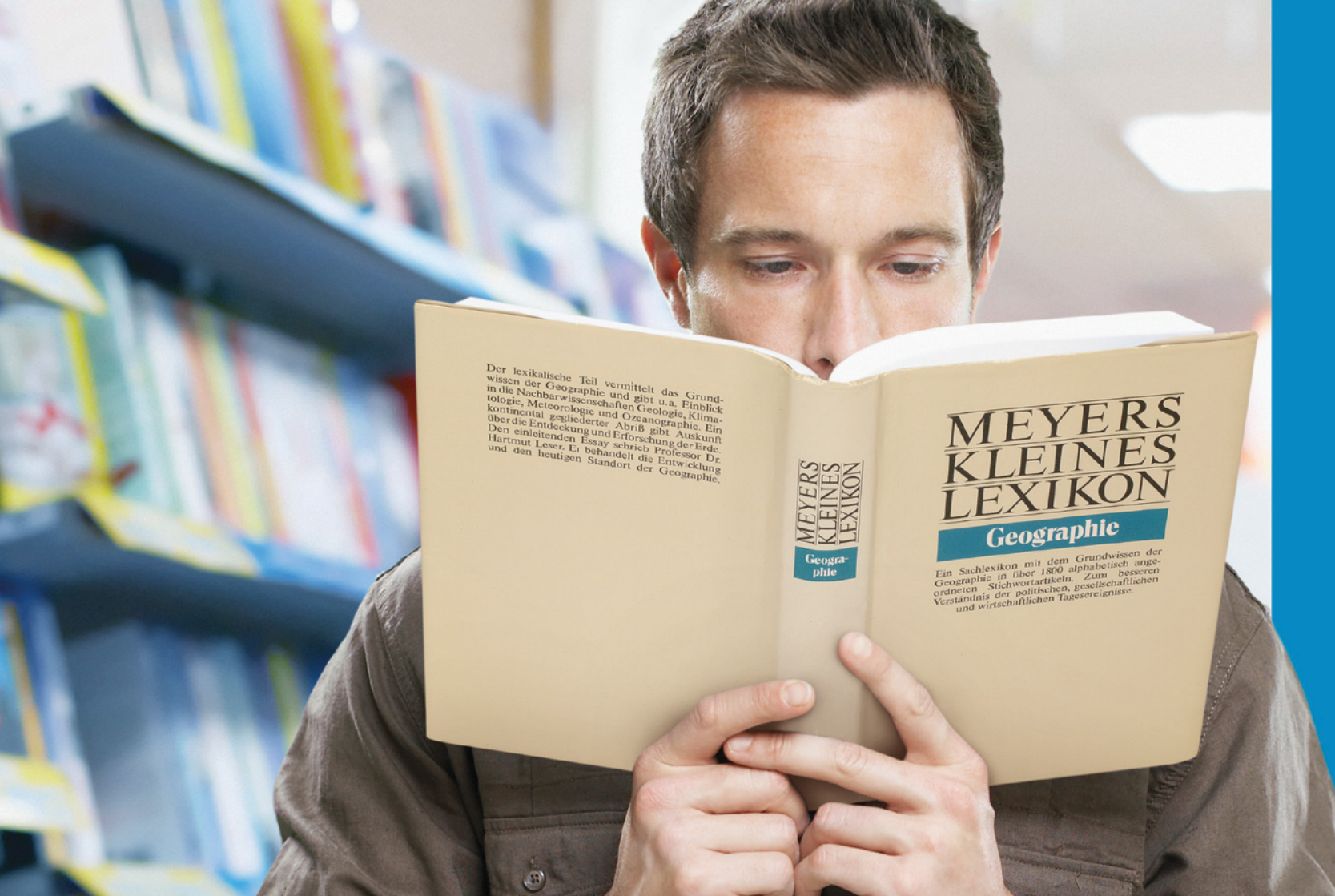
Walter Gropius was more than just an exceptionally gifted architect. He also possessed the talent for persuading influential people to get involved in his plans. In 1919, he merged the Kunstschnle and Kunstgewerbeschule Weimar schools to create the Staatliche Bauhaus. Gropius attracted brilliant artists such as Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky to the school, with whom he developed a revolutionary programme: the Bauhaus combined design disciplines ranging from graphic design and the fine arts to architecture and surpassed all conventions, as demonstrated to this day by buildings and classic designs such as the Wagenfeld table lamp. Not even the national socialists could hamper the success of Bauhaus. Exiled from Germany, emigrants took with them their modern approach, introducing it all over the world. For example, they built the Israeli city of Tel Aviv, also known as the White City. In the late 1950s, they developed Lafayette Park, a spacious park and residential area in Detroit, Michigan. To this day, the Bauhaus-Universität in Weimar still follows Gropius's concept. Klassik Stiftung Weimar is in the process of building a new Bauhaus museum in Weimar, which will replace the current exhibition. After all, the Bauhaus concept is the most influential and successful export of German culture in the 20th century and should be commemorated in a contemporary way.



### The prototype for the maths teacher.

'According to Adam Riese ...' – many Germans still use this phrase to add weight to the results of their calculations. And they may not even know who Adam Riese was, whose last name over time has sprouted an extra 'e'. To discover who he is, you simply have to walk past the house at Michaelisstrasse 48 in Erfurt. A bust, a bronze plaque and an abacus integrated into the road inform passers-by that this is the location where Adam Riese's first arithmetic book was printed in 1518. Initially a textbook for children, it paved the way for the future: in Erfurt, the expert mathematician wrote his main body of work, *Rechenung auff der linihen und federn*, in which Riese not only teaches division and multiplication, but also promotes his idea of replacing the confusing Roman numerals with the much more practical Arabic numbers. Born in Franconia, Riese worked in Erfurt between 1518 and 1522. He wrote in German instead of Latin, ensuring that tradesmen and merchants could also understand his calculation methods. His writing, which was reproduced into the 17th century, helped to establish written German.





Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.

## Knowledge for millions.

With 52 volumes and more than 90 million words, Große Meyersche Conversations-Lexikon für die gebildeten Stände from 1855 is the most comprehensive German lexicon of the 19th century. The author of this pioneering work was Joseph Meyer, the visionary from Gotha. In 1826, he established the Bibliographisches Institut. Developing new sales and advertising methods such as posters at post offices, advertising catalogues and newspaper ads, he was able to reach a whole new audience with his classics, Bibles and atlases. He also sold his publications at affordable prices – despite the opposition of the book trade. He eventually came up with the idea of developing a lexicon that would target a wide audience, and not just the educated. His goal was to upset the oppressive monopoly of knowledge which had plagued the people for so long. Meyer wrote many of the articles himself. He demanded that his 120 co-authors embrace progress across all areas of knowledge. This approach survived into the 1980s, at which point the Bibliographisches Institut merged with the Brockhaus publishing house. The Meyers Lexikon was discontinued to further promote the Brockhaus encyclopaedia.





Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.



### Germany's biggest shoe cabinet.

Out of 60 applicants throughout Europe, Erfurt was the city selected for construction of the new cutting-edge logistics centre of Zalando, a large German online provider of shoes, fashions and sports items. From 2013, the centre will be responsible for supplying half of western Europe, creating around 1,000 jobs for Thuringians. The decision to build in Erfurt was based on the city's central location, its modern infrastructure and successful collaboration with the Thuringian Ministry for Economy and the Erfurt city government.

Thuringia has become an attractive location for the logistics industry. Another example is Redcoon GmbH, a subsidiary of Media-Saturn-Holding. The Internet retailer sells around 24,000 electric products from TVs and computers to household appliances, gardening tools and musical instruments. In the future, the products will be dispatched from Apfelstädt, where from 2014 logistics partner FIEGE will be creating some 180 jobs.



### Just to be on the safe side.

People have an innate need to protect themselves from disaster. However, it's only through expansion of trade and the monetary and credit system that the concept of financial risk hedging came about. Ernst-Wilhelm Arnoldi was the first to take the safe approach. In Gotha in 1820, the clever entrepreneur established the Feuerversicherungsbank des Deutschen Handelsstandes (Fire Insurance Bank of the German Merchant Industry) and seven years later the first German life insurance bank, thus laying down the foundation for Gothaer Versicherungen, an insurance company that is still successful to this day, and making him the undisputed

father of insurance. His success was based on a simple – yet at the time globally unique – principle: he accepted payments from people in return for protection against potential risks and successfully invested the money. If the insured object was damaged, he compensated the customer. Arnoldi's concept was based on mutual benefit. He established the first large-scale insurance company, which soon served as a model for Germany and other countries. In Gotha, Germany's only insurance history museum commemorates Arnoldi.





Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.



## The eighth wonder of Jena.

The Zeiss-Planetarium Jena is the longest-operating planetarium in the world. Following its grand opening in 1926, the press praised the building with its dome measuring 23 metres in diameter and named it the new ‘wonder of Jena’, based on the seven wonders of Jena described in a Latin poem dating from the early modern period.

Today, the planetarium is a protected monument and on the outside looks the same as it did back then. However, the interior features cutting-edge technology from Jena and Ilmenau, painting the heavens for all to see: the Zeiss UNIVERSARIUM is one of the world’s best projectors, reproducing the stars on the interior surface of the planetarium dome, 800 square metres in size, in brilliant quality. Controlled by a computer, it features glass fibre optics and Zeiss Powerdome technology, making it possible to project astronomical objects such as nebulae and galaxies in deceptively realistic quality. The 3D sound system was provided by the Fraunhofer-Institut in Ilmenau and provides a sound experience like no other in the world. Incidentally, the planetarium system is a small energy wonder itself: the projectors require one-third of the power used by the previous system. And no additional air conditioning is necessary.



## Where ideas and innovations have a tradition.

### Optimised, superior engines.

Daimlers feature the power of Thuringia under their bonnets: almost every third engine built into Mercedes cars now comes from Kölleda. In the Erfurter Kreuz industrial estate in Arnstadt, a new factory is being built for the purpose of further enhancing the company's engines. NANOSLIDE technology, developed by Mercedes-Benz, optimises cylinder surfaces by spraying metal droplets onto the inner walls of the cylinders of the lightweight aluminium crankcase. The resulting ultra-fine iron coating is processed in such a way as to create a smooth surface with fine pores, thus reducing friction and wear between the pistons and cylinder walls by 50 per cent in comparison to the barrel technologies available to date. It slows down the wear effect and reduces fuel consumption and carbon emissions. The factory will begin supplying the specialised parts in 2013.



### Poking fun at politicians.

Visitors from western Germany are often astounded: 'That kind of thing was allowed in East Germany?' The Summer Palace in Greiz houses one of the most significant caricature collections in Germany. Opened in 1975, the Satiricum collection showcases political caricatures, including those from the time of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. Some of them are so cryptic that only a 'well-informed East German citizen' would understand them without any explanation. Others, on the other hand, are a bit cruder. In the small city in eastern Thuringia, the politicians once turned a blind eye to something that would have been almost impossible in Berlin, Leipzig and Dresden. But that's not to say that censorship did not exist. The Greiz collection is also renowned for its treasures from other epochs, many of which originate from the House of Reuss. The princes had a weakness for caricatures dating from the 17th–19th centuries and acquired them from influential artists such as Hogarth, Chodowiecki, Gillray and Daumier. The collection also contains a number of pieces from the time of the Vormärz (pre-March) and the revolution of 1848 as well as the satirical magazines, *Simplicissimus* and *Der Wahre Jacob*. Germany's reunification is also represented in spades, as the Satiricum has been collecting again since 1990.



### The true inventor of instant soup.

Many rumours just refuse to die, including the one that Julius Maggi, the Swiss founder of the Maggi company, invented the concept of instant soup. The truth is that Rudolf Scheller from Hildburghausen, Thuringia, was producing instant soup 15 years earlier and supplying it to the Prussian army. Prussia was at war with France in 1870 and 1871 and provided its soldiers with rations such as pea paste, which could be added to water and cooked into a soup. However, the paste was too moist and thus did not keep very long. Scheller improved the recipe and pressed the ingredients into dry bars. The military denied the fact that entrepreneur Scheller invented instant soup, but that did not stop him. He began producing his 'condensed soups' in 1872 on a larger scale. His four soup varieties consisted of rice, flour, semolina and peas and could be made into soup in just a few minutes. Scheller sold his products as far away as the US and there was no competition until Maggi and Knorr began successfully promoting their instant products. In 1947, the 'first condensed soup factory' in Hildburghausen began its operations.



Where art and culture have a tradition.







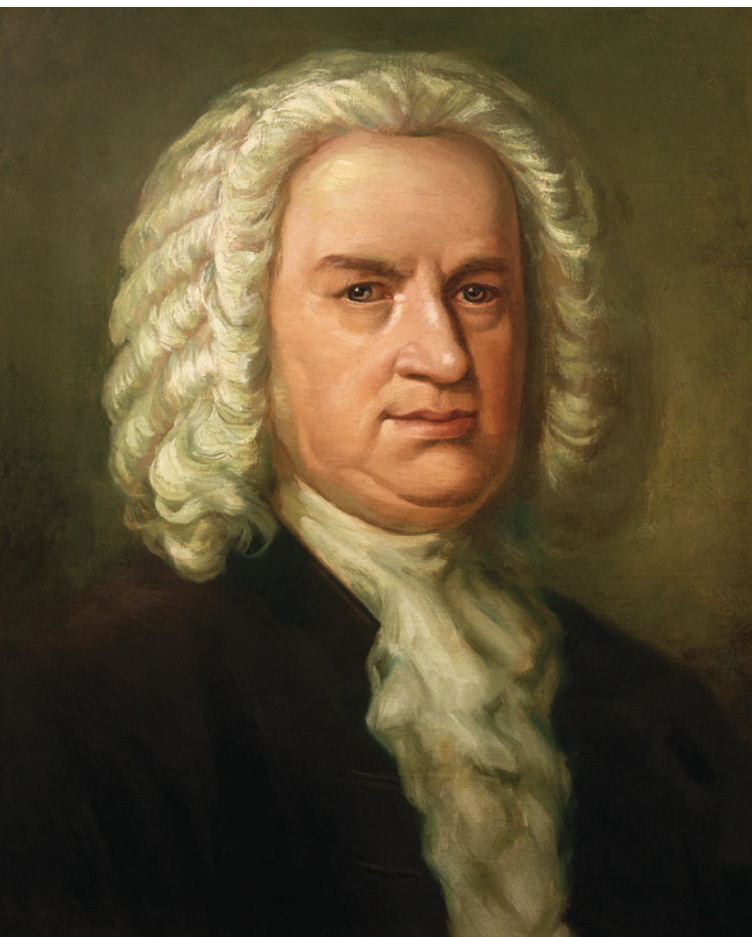
Where art and culture are born.

## An association of poets with a backstory – Goethe and Schiller in Thuringia.

Friendship or an alliance of convenience? This is not only a modern question, but also an issue addressed by contemporaries of the two poets. Often mentioned together, Goethe and Schiller influenced each other, exchanged letters, worked together on the magazine, *Die Horen*, and taunted other authors in their *Xenien* distichs. Weimar Minister Goethe often and, it seems, eagerly visited Jena professor Schiller, whose wife Charlotte said she had trouble sleeping at night due to the laughter in the next room. It was no coincidence that Goethe, born in Hesse, and Schiller, born in Swabia, established their friendship in Thuringia. The Duchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, to which the nearby University of Jena belonged, offered the ideal circumstances for both of them: many influential scientists, philosophers and writers chose to live there, due in part to the relatively liberal political climate. Around the year 1800, no other region in Germany offered the same density of intellectual brilliance. Goethe himself and, to a greater extent, the rest of the world following his death glorified his friendship with Schiller, as demonstrated by the statue of the two in front of the German National Theatre in Weimar. Dedicated in 1857, the work of art bears the dramatic inscription: 'To the two poets Goethe and Schiller. The Fatherland.'



Where art and culture have a tradition.



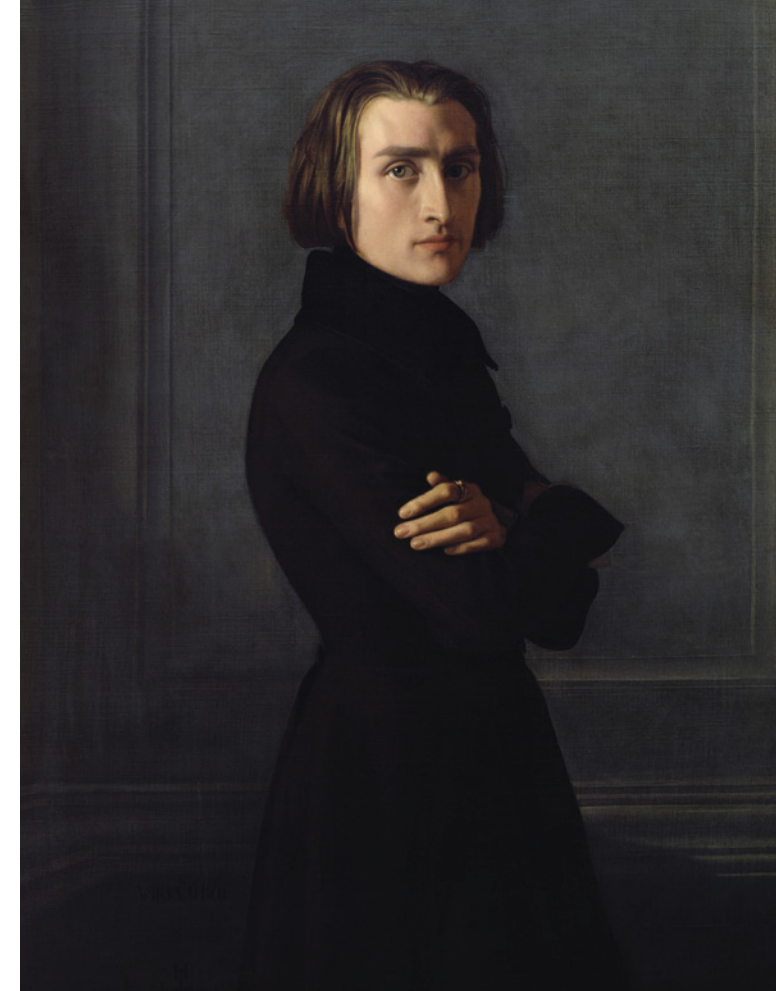
### Bach and Liszt – expert pianists with unwavering appeal.

While he was still alive, few people were aware that Johann Sebastian Bach was a composer. Born in Eisenach, Bach's reputation was based on his skills as an organist, conductor and cantor. Soon after his death, he was nearly forgotten. Today, music enthusiasts from all over the world travel to Eisenach to attend concerts at the Bach House, to Arnstadt, where he held his first position and the church in which he got married is located, or to Weimar, where he was employed as court musician for years. No other composer has influenced as many musicians as Bach. His admirers range from Beethoven and Mendelssohn to Schönberg and jazz greats such as Nina Simone.

Franz Liszt is one of the musicians rescued by Bach from obscurity, having reworked some of Bach's pieces for the piano and having found inspiration in the baroque composer for some of his organ compositions. Today, the International Bach | Liszt Organ Competition Erfurt – Weimar – Merseburg pays homage to this artistic connection.

Liszt not only developed as a composer in the footsteps of his renowned predecessor. About 140 years after Bach, Franz Liszt took on a position at the Weimar court, thus ending a stage of life in which the celebrated pianist had performed one concert after the other throughout Europe. Liszt, who like Bach was known to many of his contemporaries primarily as a virtuoso, lived in Weimar between 1848 and 1861 and from 1869 to his death.

Born in Hungary, Liszt transformed Weimar into one of Europe's musical centres, attracting visitors such as Hector Berlioz and Johannes Brahms. Today, the academy of music in Weimar bears his name. Located at Marienstrasse 17, Liszt's second flat in Weimar is now a museum, where visitors can see and admire the composer's original Bechstein grand piano, among other things.





Where art and culture have a tradition.



### Where the proletariat meets the avant-garde.

Born to workers in Gera in 1891, Otto Dix grew up in a flat on the banks of the White Elster. The famous painter embraced his proletarian roots his entire life – even though it was often held against him – as demonstrated by the following quote in 1963: ‘I don’t paint what anybody wants. Sorry. I just happen to be such a self-confident proletarian, you know, that I say: “I’m going to do that! You can say what you want.” I don’t know myself what that’s good for. But I do it.’

Before the First World War, Dix focused on the avant-garde, experimenting with cubist and futuristic shapes. He is best known for his uncompromising realism. His work reflects the breaks and upheavals of the 20th century in a truly unique way.

In 1991, Gera inaugurated the restored and expanded house in which Otto Dix was born as a museum, which now houses one of the largest public collections of Dix’s artwork.



### One picture – 1,700 square metres of history.

Surrounded by Werner Tübke’s monumental painting, visitors feel very small. On a canvas 123 metres in length, the painting tells the story of humanism, the Reformation and the German Peasants’ War as part of a comprehensive renewal process, making it one of the most spectacular works of art in Germany’s post-war era. The East German government erected a building complex specifically to hold it: the Panorama Museum in Bad Frankenhausen was built at the foot of the Kyffhäuser hills, as this is the location where the decisive battle of the German Peasants’ War took place on 15 May 1525.

Beginning in 1976, Tübke spent more than ten years creating the imposing painting in a style similar to that of former masters such as Dürer. Each of the approximately 3,000 individual characters, which include Martin Luther and Thomas Müntzer, is unique and costumed in vibrant colours. Today, the Peasants’ War panorama is considered to be the ‘Sistine Chapel of the North’.







Where art and culture have a tradition.

## Piano? Bechstein!

It is not only music enthusiasts who know what Bechstein stands for. With some 5,000 instruments sold annually, the company is Europe's largest piano manufacturer. The piano factory was founded in 1853 by Carl Bechstein, who came from Gotha, and was initially a one-man operation. Using sturdy, durable materials, Bechstein was soon producing extremely popular pianos for export. Buyers included concert organisers, imperial courts and conservatories. But it was not only his instruments that made him world-renowned. In London, Paris and St Petersburg, his company built concert halls, which were named after the company founder. Composers such as Franz Liszt, Richard Wagner and Claude Debussy valued his grand pianos. Furthermore, Bechstein instruments have always been popular among pianists, both for concerts and studio recordings. Famous recordings include those of Artur Schnabel and Edwin Fischer from the 1930s. After the Second World War, pianists such as Jorge Bolet and Dinu Lipatti recorded records on Bechstein grand pianos. Like the Beatles, David Bowie and Elton John, jazz musicians are also fond of Bechstein pianos.





Where art and culture have a tradition.



### Myth and history become one.

Wartburg Castle plays a key role in German history like almost no other. Documented for the first time in 1080, Wartburg represented one of the centres of court culture around 1200. The legendary singing contest between Wolfram von Eschenbach, Walther von der Vogelweide and other minstrels is said to have taken place here. A prophecy is also supposed to have played a key role in the story: a Hungarian princess would someday marry the landgrave's son. This princess, Elisabeth, actually came to Wartburg Castle when she was four years old and was married to Ludwig IV in 1221. Her pious life made her popular. She would often take food from the landgrave's stores and share it with the poor. Legend has it that one day Ludwig caught his wife in the act. Elisabeth told him there were only roses in the basket. When he angrily opened it, the bread had actually transformed into roses. A miracle! Just four years after her death, the pope canonised Elisabeth of Thuringia. Wartburg Castle continued to play a role in history: in 1521 and 1522, Martin Luther translated the New Testament into German. And the famous Wartburg festivals were held in 1817 and 1848.



### The legacy of Anna Amalia.

The Duke of Saxe-Weimar made his books accessible to the general public in 1691, marking the start of the Duchess Anna Amalia Library, one of the most significant research libraries in Germany.

Like the small duchy on the banks of the Ilm, the library was also initially like any other comparable institution. But as Weimar was developing into a cultural centre, the library experienced a rapid boom. In 1766, Duchess Anna Amalia had the library moved to the Green Castle. By around 1800, the library had joined the ranks of Germany's most notable book collections.

The famous Rococo Hall which now attracts visitors from all over was once frequented by personalities such as Goethe, thumbing through manuscripts and tomes. The library made it into the headlines in September 2004 when a fire broke out and consumed the top floor and the Rococo Hall. Significant works of art and 50,000 valuable books were destroyed and 62,000 damaged. In 2007, the President of Germany reopened the restored building.





## Where art and culture have a tradition.

Career: duke. Calling: director.

‘The Meiningen actors are coming!’ This was the call heard in theatres from Stockholm to Trieste and from London to Moscow in the 19th century. The curtain lifted, revealing a scene that astounded the audience, even before the actors had entered the stage.

Historically accurate scenery, well-choreographed large crowd scenes and the humanist intention of the production made the Meiningen ensemble extremely popular and highly sought after. As artistic director, Georg II from Saxe-Meiningen ensured a quality of stagecraft ahead of its time, incorporating the concept of a comprehensive work of art for the genre of onstage theatre, just as Wagner did for the opera.

Today, audiences can experience a range of productions, including musicals, theatre, concerts, ballet and puppet theatre. Established in 1690, the Meiningen Court Orchestra provides musical accompaniment. The theatre, a neoclassicist building constructed in 1831, was fully renovated on the occasion of its 180th anniversary. Featuring cutting-edge theatre equipment, it offers a theatre experience in a historical ambience.



## Where orchids and legends bloom.

The Kyffhäuser national park comprises cliffs and caves, marshlands and calcareous grasslands, forest and orchards. 30 different types of orchids bloom in this paradise to be enjoyed by hikers and cyclists alike. And in autumn, thousands of cranes stop here on their way south. However, the Kyffhäuser region is nationally renowned for its Barbarossa Cave near Rottleben. The unique stone structures in the enormous cave are impressive, as is the myth of the king in the mountain. Legend has it that Frederick I, also known as Barbarossa, is sleeping in the cave. One day he will awake, save the kingdom, return it to its former glory and destroy all evil in one last battle. The legend has appeared repeatedly in literature. Heinrich Heine satirised the yearning for Barbarossa in his Germany: A Winter's Tale. In addition to Barbarossa, William I and the nobility of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen helped to shape the face of the region. The region's iconic landmark is the imperial castle, which is located in the heart of the Kyffhäuser hills. Also there is the imposing Kyffhäuser Monument, which measures 81 metres in height and features a statue of William I on a horse and Barbarossa carved out of stone.





Where art and culture have a tradition.



### A Thuringian in New York.

The USA was the number one destination for many Jewish people who managed to escape from the Nazis. One of them, a man from Thuringia, became one of the most distinguished American journalists of his generation: Max Frankel. Until he emigrated to America, his surname had been “Fränkel” written with an “ä”.

Born in 1930 in Gera, Max Frankel and his parents moved to Weissenfels in 1931. They were deported to Poland in 1938. One year later, the American embassy in Berlin finally granted Max and his mother their long-awaited entry into the United States. They arrived in New York in February 1940. The boy didn't see his father again until after the war.

Max Frankel studied and was hired by the New York Times, the most prominent newspaper in the US. Here, he built up a career as a correspondent at the White House, as chief Washington correspondent and as foreign correspondent in Vienna, Havana and Moscow. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his reports on Richard Nixon's visit to China. From 1986 to 1994, he was the chief executive editor of The New York Times.



### Apolda, Buenos Aires, Cologne.

All of the bells manufactured in Apolda are unique, with their own sound and history. And they can be found all over the world, including at the City Council in Buenos Aires and in the Cologne Cathedral. In the early 1920s, the people of Cologne were looking to replace the cathedral's main bell. However, they wanted it to issue such a specific sound that only one foundry was prepared to fill the order: the Ulrich company in Apolda. Weighing 24 tonnes and measuring 3.22 metres in diameter, the St Peter's Bell is the largest freely swinging bell in the world. Today, the bell foundry is closed but the tradition and culture of the bells live on all over the world. Along the A4 motorway between Weimar and Jena, you will see a sign that reads 'Glockenstadt Apolda', which translated means 'Apolda, city of bells'. The hourly ringing in Apolda is a truly unique and exceptional experience. The three bells of the Apolda Lutheran Church come from three different centuries and only ring every four years. The three tones – E, G sharp and C sharp – can be heard throughout the city. The Glockenmuseum Apolda, which serves as both a bell and city museum, showcases bells large and small from various centuries as well as the history of bellfounding.





Where art and culture have a tradition.

## Pomp and circumstance with steps.

When the famous Maria Gloriosa bell in the middle tower of Erfurt Cathedral rings, you can be sure it is a special occasion. There are two ways to understand this sentence: on the one hand, the bell only rings to mark special occasions. On the other, the sound is so unique that many people actually record the eight occasions in their calendar, making the ringing itself the special occasion. However, the deep E of the world's largest freely swinging bell dating from the Middle Ages is not the only reason for celebration. The architectural ensemble on the Cathedral Hill consisting of Erfurt Cathedral, St Severus Church and the imposing 70 steps creates a visual harmony that has become an icon of Erfurt. The size of the cathedral and the adorned facade demonstrate the significance of the city in the Middle Ages. The Wolfram candlesticks, a bronze sculpture from the 12th century and most notably the choir window, the chair and the high altar are just some of the treasures housed inside the cathedral. The stained glass of the windows, which almost measure 19 metres in height, was created between 1370 and 1420. The chair is considered to be one of the best-preserved and highest-quality of the 14th century. The ornate altar dating from 1697 underscores the significance of the Catholic liturgy in the region, which sparked Luther's Reformation.





Where art and culture have a tradition.



### A resounding hallelujah with the pope.

While ploughing his fields, a farmer once found a wooden portrait of Mary, mother of God. He realised it must have come from the small church burnt to the ground during the German Peasants' War. He had the powerful image returned to a place of honour. When a horse epidemic broke out in the region in 1625, the parson at that time sent the farmers to the image of Mary to ask for her help. Miraculously, the animals recovered.

This is the story according to the legend on which the reputation of the Chapel of the Shrine in Etzelsbach is based. To this day, the pilgrimage to the small 19th-century church is still called a 'horse pilgrimage'.

The Chapel of the Shrine in Etzelsbach made a name for itself around the world on 23 September 2011, when Pope Benedict XVI stopped in Eichsfeld during his tour of Germany. With his visit to the pilgrimage chapel made of red brick, the Pope said he was able to fulfil a lifelong wish. He first heard of Eichsfeld in his youth and had always wanted to pray there among the Thuringians. And that is exactly what they wanted, too. Some 90,000 believers – many more than expected – joined the Pope in celebration of the Vespers of the Blessed Virgin Mary.





## Where art and culture have a tradition.

### A Northern German in Eichsfeld.

It is commonly agreed that Theodor Storm is THE poet of Schleswig-Holstein. What not many people know, however, is that the influential storyteller and poet lived eight years of his life in Eichsfeld. The political atmosphere in his home town had made it impossible for him to continue practising law there. He therefore moved to Potsdam in 1853 and then to Heiligenstadt in 1856, where he made a modest living as a judge. In the Catholic town of Eichsfeld, the poet discovered the art of realistic storytelling which would make him famous. Inspired by the devoutly religious people of the region, Storm readdressed a theme that had intensively occupied him as a young man: the role of Christianity and the church.

In 1988, Heiligenstadt opened the Theodor Storm literary museum to mark the 100th anniversary of his death. Housed in an attractive timber-framed building constructed in 1436, the permanent exhibition was comprehensively updated a few years ago. Visitors can see documents and exhibits on notions such as home and the outlands, fairy tales and Christmas.



### Italy in Gotha.

In the 17th century, it was primarily France and Italy which competed for the leading role in theatre. But if you'd like to experience just how far Singspiel, opera and drama had come during the baroque period, you should visit the Friedenstein Castle in Gotha. In the west tower, you will find the oldest baroque theatre to feature functional, manually operated wooden stage machinery. Between 1681 and 1687, Frederick I, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, had the theatre and its Italian-style mechanical stage built with all the technology available at that time. For example, there are 18 trolleys below the stage which enable entire landscapes to roll onto and off the stage. A sophisticated system of central shafts and ropes makes it possible to quietly slide multiple backdrops at the same time. The theatre experienced its heyday in the second half of the 18th century, when Ernest II hired a permanent theatre ensemble – a novelty in German courts. Conrad Ekhof, one of the most famous actors of his time, took over management in 1775 and is the inspiration behind the baroque theatre's present-day name. The Ekhof Festival with operas, theatrical productions, readings and concerts is also held every summer.





Where art and culture have a tradition.



### Bread culture with mass appeal.

Bernd das Brot (Bernd the Bread) is a foul-tempered, speaking loaf of white bread with arms that are much too short. He prefers to spend his leisure time at home in Erfurt, staring at the south-facing wall, memorising the wallpaper pattern, reading his favourite newspaper *The Desert and You* and watching test cards on the TV. Nevertheless, Bernd the Bread is a cult figure. He helped the KiKA children's channel in Erfurt win the Grimme Award in 2004. But lots of adults also love the stories surrounding Bernd and his closest friends, Chili, the hyperactive stunt sheep with red plaits, and Briegel der Busch (Briegel the Bush), the big-time inventor with a penchant for shock effect. Bernd was the result of a search for a KiKA mascot. Producer and comedian Tommy Krappweis sketched a loaf of white bread on a serviette in a pizzeria, which was eventually developed into Bernd. In addition to the series, there are now several TV shows connected to the character. The KiKA portfolio now also features other shows and series with high ratings, such as *Augsburger Puppenkiste* (Augsburg Marionette Theatre) and the *Schloss Einstein* (Einstein Castle) soap opera, which sparked a trend away from the many cartoons shown by commercial channels.



### Gold, silver and the Black Death.

In 1349, armed citizens attacked the Jewish district in Erfurt, burning the houses to the ground and killing all the inhabitants, as they believed the Jews were responsible for bringing the plague. In 1998 – nearly 650 years later – a treasure was found during construction work carried out near the Old Synagogue: around 3,000 French silver coins and bars of silver and more than 700 individual Gothic artefacts made of gold, including a golden wedding ring from the early 14th century, were excavated below a cellar staircase. Historians speculate that wealthy Jews had hidden these treasures in anticipation of the pogrom. The find attracted a great deal of attention. Many Gothic artefacts have been found in churches and monasteries, but up to now researchers have only come across descriptions of jewellery and works of art from wealthy homes. Due to its artistic and historical significance, the Erfurt Treasure has travelled to Paris, London and New York. It is now housed in an exhibition at the Old Synagogue, which the British Guild of Travel Writers presented with the Best European Tourism Project award in 2011.



Where life and passion have a tradition.







Where life and passion have a tradition.

## Eva Padberg – born in Thuringia but popular the world over.

Eva Padberg is probably Thuringia's most attractive export. Born in Bad Frankenhausen on 27 January 1980, the top model has made a name for herself all over the world. But it doesn't end there: if you take a look at her schedule and list of projects, you will quickly see that the 32-year-old is extremely versatile. She has not only conquered catwalks around the globe, but was also named the 'Sexiest Woman in the World'. She has demonstrated her skills as a host, author, singer and actor. She presented the Bambi award along with Johannes B. Kerner and Harald Schmidt. She played minor roles in the films Vicky and the Treasure of the Gods and Woman in Love. She and her husband also established the Dapayk & Padberg duo, with whom she has already recorded two albums and numerous singles. Her book, Model-Ich, and her work as a juror and mentor in the Das perfekte Model coaching show on the Vox channel demonstrate just how important it is to her to provide others with a realistic view of modelling. In addition to her career, Eva Padberg is also dedicated to charitable causes, supporting numerous projects and travelling around the world for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Altogether, this variety of skills and interests make Eva Padberg a typical Thuringian.



Bad Frankenhausen



Where life and passion have a tradition.



### A chef reaches for the stars.

Roasts, dumplings, creamy sauces – the people of Thuringia love their famous, hearty home cooking. But there are now also numerous upmarket restaurants that offer foods typical of the region. Ralf Kronmüller, who is a young top chef at Schlossrestaurant Sondershausen, is exceptionally successful. With his culinary creations, he impressed the discerning inspectors of the Michelin Guide, who presented him with a star in 2010 and confirmed it again in 2011. But the distinctions hardly stop there. The French gourmet bible Gault Millau named Kronmüller the ‘up-and-coming Thuringian of the year’ in the current 2012 German issue. Ralf Kronmüller is a genius in the kitchen. He took over management of the restaurant right after his final examination at the Heidelberg Hotel Management School. Sondershausen in northern Thuringia and its castle, the former residence of the Schwarzburg nobility, offer the ideal backdrop for Kronmüller’s fine cuisine. He combines classic cooking skills and innovative elements – with unrivalled expertise. Exceptional products and fresh ingredients from the region round off the menu to perfection. With its young team, Schlossrestaurant also offers the outstanding cuisine and services praised in the Michelin Guide.



Sondershausen



### In the clutches of the king, a Thuringian discovers china.

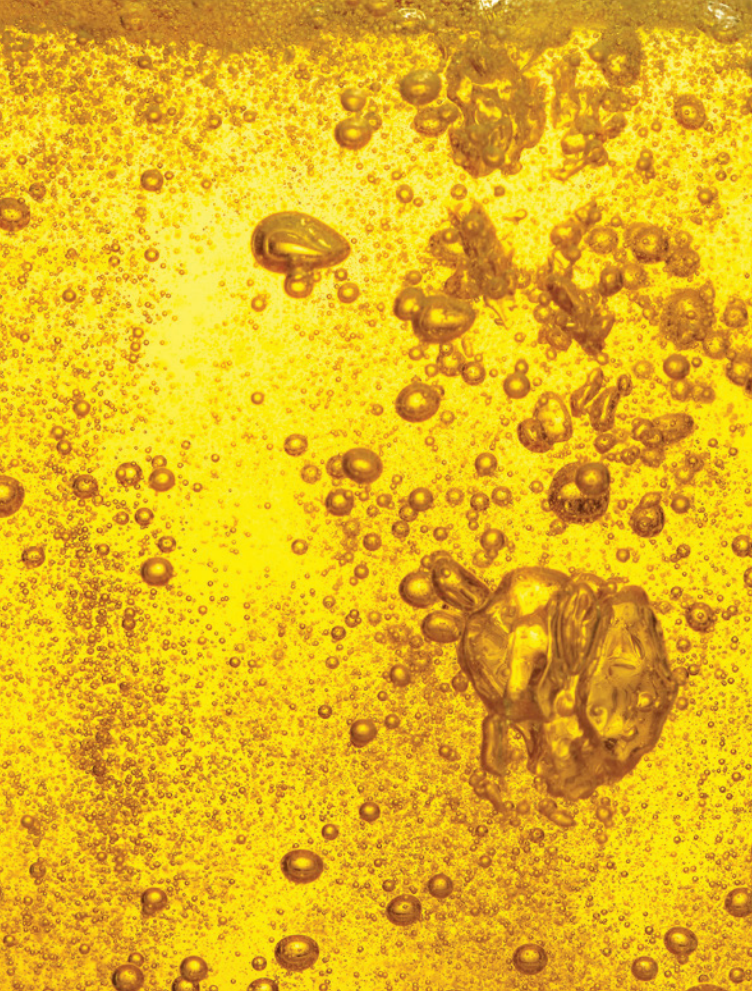
The creator of Meißner porcelain was a Thuringian. Johann Friedrich Böttger was born in Schleiz in 1682, trained as a pharmacist in Berlin, discovered his passion for alchemy and fled the Prussian king only to end up in the clutches of another ruler: Augustus II the Strong had also heard that Böttger was close to discovering a method for creating gold. The Saxon king promptly detained Böttger and forced him to work. Although he never discovered any methods for creating gold, he did develop the formula for snow-white porcelain in 1708.

The Chinese monopoly on coveted porcelain had come to an end. However, Johann Friedrich Böttger was not able to enjoy his success for long. All the hard work and wine had taken their toll on his health and he died in 1719. The secret porcelain formula was kept safe for some time. But about five decades after Böttger, three other Thuringians all developed methods for creating porcelain at the same time: theologian Georg Heinrich Macheleid, cottage inspector Johann Wolfgang Hammann and glass manufacturer Johann Gotthelf Greiner. As competitors, they laid the foundation for the Thuringian porcelain tradition. One of the largest porcelain factories in Europe is KAHLA/Thüringen Porzellan GmbH, established in 1844.



Kahla





Where life and passion have a tradition.

### Pure beer – a requirement in Thuringia.

1998 turned out to be a good year for the town of Weißensee in Sömmerda. In the archive, someone found a tavern ordinance from 1434, which suggests that the oldest purity law for beer comes from Thuringia. Under threat of punishment, the ‘Statuta thaberna’ stipulated that only hops, malt and water could be used in the brewing of beer. Up to then, Bavarian beer brewers had claimed the world’s oldest food ordinance for themselves – based on a document originating from 1516. Brewing law was widespread during the Middle Ages and issued by city councils or territorial lords. The earliest documented case is a brewing law issued in 974 by Otto II to the Liège church in what is Belgium today. At that time, people were not familiar with the concept of using hops in the production of beer. Since 2000, beer has also been brewed at a historical site in Thuringia. At the Ratsbrauerei inside the historic Weißensee town hall, the brewing master enjoys talking about the art of brewing beer – and offers his Weißenseer Ratsbräu beer with the quality seal, ‘Original Thüringer Qualität’.



Weißensee



### It’s all about the sausage here.

It’s not only the Thuringians who love their bratwurst. The earliest recorded mention of bratwurst comes from 1404. In a copy of the Arnstadt monastery invoice, it says, ‘1 gr vor darne czu brotwurstin’ (1 Groschen for bratwurst casings). In 1432, the butcher ordinance, a type of purity law for the bratwurst, was issued in Weimar, leading to the birth of the Thuringian bratwurst or ‘Thüringer Roster’. EU regulations stipulate that a bratwurst must be at least 15 centimetres long and made of medium-fine meat, whether raw or cooked. Since 2004, it has also been a geographically protected good: at least 51 per cent of the raw ingredients must come from Thuringia.

In Holzhausen, the first-ever German bratwurst museum focuses on the history, tradition and culture of the Thuringian bratwurst. But the significance of the bratwurst can also be seen elsewhere: in 2006, a two-metre-tall wooden bratwurst sculpture was erected at the Holzhausen city limits closest to Arnstadt. The roundabout has since been called ‘bratwurst roundabout’ by the locals.



Holzhausen



Where life and passion have a tradition.

## The UNESCO Hainich National Park – where wildcats still roam.

Hainich Forest, Germany's largest continuous deciduous forest, lies between Eisenach, Mühlhausen and Bad Langensalza. Nearly half of the 16,000 hectares belong to the national park of the same name. This natural forest is largely made up of unspoilt nature. Because of the high volume of beech trees, UNESCO named the Hainich National Park – along with four other old beech forests – a World Heritage Site in 2011, increasing its status to that of landscapes such as Yellowstone National Park and the Galapagos Islands.

In addition to beech trees, numerous other deciduous trees such as ash, maple, lime and the rare wild service tree flourish in the Hainich National Park, not to mention a wide variety of fauna. For example, Hainich Forest is home to wildcats, 15 species of forest bat, pine martens and beetles which were thought to be extinct. Since 2005, a canopy walkway has led through the treetops of the forest, allowing visitors to discover parts of the forest usually inaccessible.







Where life and passion have a tradition.

### Toys as cultural treasures.

A travelling circus stirs things up at the Thüringer Kirmes exhibition: between timber-frame houses, a carousel and a shooting range, a female artist in a blue dress is riding horseback as others tend to their business. This scene played out at the beginning of the 20th century – ‘play’ being the operative word: toy manufacturers created the 67 nearly life-sized figures showcased at the Thüringer Kirmes exhibition. Companies used this ensemble to advertise the Sonneberg toy industry at the 1910 World’s Fair in Brussels – and won the grand prize.

The valuable set is now housed at Deutsches Spielzeugmuseum Sonneberg, which holds the oldest toy collection in Germany. Other treasures at the museum include Thuringian porcelain dolls, early Käthe Kruse dolls, 18th- and 19th-century wooden toys originating in Sonneberg, the Ore Mountains and Alpine valleys, a small but priceless collection of toys from Ancient Egypt, antique toys from Greece and Rome, and the ‘Gulliver in Lilliput’ set. There are also lots of teddy bears and model trains.



### The first day of school – how sweet it is.

For generations, photos taken on the first day of school in Germany have shown proud faces with missing teeth and a candy cone almost as big as the person carrying it.

This custom of giving children sweets on the first day of school is first documented in Jena, where in 1817 some children were given a small paper bag filled with pastries. Initially, the custom was limited to boys and girls in Thuringia, Saxony, Silesia and Bohemia. It was not until the 20th century that it spread throughout Germany. For many years, children of poor families had to look on as wealthier classmates ate their sweets on the first day of school.





Where life and passion have a tradition.

### Necessity is the mother of invention.

Located along the southern leg of the Rennsteig ridgeway, the small town of Lauscha is best known as the birthplace of the Christmas tree bauble. According to the legend, glass manufacturers in Lauscha could not afford real nuts or apples for decorating the tree. So one of them created glass versions instead.

The Christmas tree decoration is first recorded in 1847 but it took another 20 years to create the technical equipment required for mass-producing large, thin-walled baubles. The Thuringians found support in the US: around 1880, F. W. Woolworth heard about the glass items and sold them for a whopping \$25 in his store in Pennsylvania. By 1900, at which time Woolworths was already a chain, the sparkling baubles, angels, Father Christmases, stars and 5,000 other glass variants had already conquered the world. The Museum für Glaskunst Lauscha documents this successful period of regional history. What is more, visitors can find out how glass production has developed here since the early modern period. The first glassworks was established in Lauscha in 1597.



### Big success: little gnomes from Gräfenroda.

Garden gnome enthusiasts vs garden gnome despisers – this frivolous argument plays a role in Goethe's Hermann and Dorothea. Around nine decades later, the gnomes made it big. A terracotta company from Gräfenroda introduced a new product at the Leipzig Trade Fair of 1884: the garden gnome for everyone. Statues of diminutive people may have only adorned the gardens of the rich during the baroque period. But August Heissner and Philipp Griebel changed all that by mass-producing gnomes made of clay.

Their factory at the edge of the Thuringian Forest is considered to be the 'cradle of garden gnomes'. At the end of the 19th century, 15 terracotta factories supplied the world's growing demand for these figures, which were called 'little gnomes' back then. The common term of today, 'garden gnome', may have developed in the allotment gardens of simple workers around 1930.

The Philipp Griebels factory still manufactures the little men with white beards and red pointed hats to this day. The head of the company, who is called Philipp Griebel after his ancestor, has even founded a gnome museum.





Where life and passion have a tradition.

## The hub of the Skat world.

Richard Strauss was a sly opponent in the game of Skat. He was so passionate about the game that he even composed a Skat party in his opera *Intermezzo*. Incidentally, the composer's Thuringian stomping grounds, Meiningen and Weimar, weren't very far from Altenburg, the city in which the game of Skat originated.

Playing cards have been manufactured in Altenburg in the eastern tip of Thuringia since 1509. In 1813, card players meeting in pubs began developing Skat from older card games. The game was soon known throughout Germany. The Skat Fountain, the world's only Skat monument, commemorates the legendary, original 'Skat brothers'. Altenburg is the hub of the Skat world and home to the German Skat Association established in 1899. And following Reunification, the association returned to Altenburg from Bielefeld, having moved there after the Second World War. Since 2001, the International Skat Court in Altenburg has been responsible for settling disputes in the game of Skat. The Museum of Playing Cards in the Altenburg Residence Castle showcases the history of Skat and playing cards and is the oldest of its kind around the world.



Where life and passion have a tradition.

## Harry Potter works his magic.

Before the wall came down, GGP Media GmbH was responsible for printing the Moscow phone book. Now the company prints books by Pope Benedict XVI, among other texts. It is one of the largest offset printers in Europe, one of the ten largest companies in Thuringia and the pride and joy of Pößneck. Before reunification, Graphische Großbetrieb Pößneck produced a majority of the books published in East Germany. One of its pioneering achievements is the fact that GGP Media was the first European book manufacturer to print on eco-friendly paper. But what really put the printers on the map was the budding wizard, Harry Potter.

The company not only printed some of the Harry Potter books in German, but also the seventh volume in English. The imaginative Joanne K. Rowling enchanted readers big and small all over the world with her Harry Potter stories, ever intensifying anticipation of the next book. Distribution of the books therefore posed a challenge for GGP Media, as not even a single copy could find its way into the hands of the public before the official release. The logistical requirements were enormous, but the printers managed to transport the books to the distribution locations and directly supply some 400 book shops every time.



## Back to its former glory.

Keep your eye on the prize! Between 1879 and the First World War, the horse racing track of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha drew in visitors to the Großer Preis von Thüringen (Great Prize of Thuringia). No other race in Germany promised more valuable prizes and the prestige awarded to the winning horses, their jockeys and the owners was outstanding – just like the atmosphere. After all, the Great Prize of Thuringia was accompanied by a fair that attracted thousands of people from all over the region.

Not even the two World Wars could hinder the races for long and the track continued to operate even during the time of East Germany. Established in 2000, the Rennverein Gotha-Boxberg 2000 association intends to return Boxberg to its former glory, which should not be difficult considering the beautiful backdrop. The magnificent Victorian stands still provide the grounds with charm and grandeur. Furthermore, Boxberg is a local holiday attraction.



## Where Little Red Riding Hood goes cross-country skiing.

‘The area is wonderful, wonderful,’ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once wrote from Ilmenau. It is no wonder that the Thuringian Forest is the most popular holiday destination in the Free State. Hikers particularly enjoy the 169-kilometre Rennsteig ridgeway. Every May, this famous mountain trail becomes a busy running course during the traditional Rennsteig Run. As a hiking path, it has major symbolic significance, since the Rennsteiglied is considered to be the unofficial hymn of Thuringia. In the winter, the Thuringian Forest transforms into a paradise for skiers. More than 1,800 kilometres of hiking/skiing paths and around 74 kilometres of cross-country skiing routes traverse through deep snow on mountains and in valleys. The winter sports town of Oberhof is especially popular and hosts world cups in biathlon, bobsleigh, cross-country skiing and the Nordic combined. Winter athletes from Thuringia are always making it onto the winners’ podium in national and international competitions, including luger David Möller, biathlete Andrea Henkel and cross-country skier Axel Teichmann. Born in Schmalkalden, Thuringia, three-time Olympic winner and world champion in biathlon Kati Wilhelm is called Little Red Riding Hood due to her red hair.





Where life and passion have a tradition.



### A rainbow of colours deep underground.

'If these grottoes were located in the US instead of Germany, people would have flocked from all over the world to see them long ago.' This statement about the Saalfeld Fairy Grottoes does not come from a recent travel guide. It is something natural scientist Ernst Haeckel said in 1914, when the former alum shale mine, which had been in operation between 1530 and 1850, was opened to the general public for viewing. In the Saalfeld Grottoes, mining and nature have created unparalleled beauty. As miners worked in the caves that they themselves had excavated, the first stalactites began to appear. Within a few centuries, the formations had further developed, earning them a spot in the Guinness World Records in 1993 as the most colourful stalactites on earth. More than 45 minerals are responsible for the over 100 tones of blue, green, yellow, red and brown. Many of the glittering stalactites are so fine that they resemble a woman's long hair, leading geologists to christen the caves the 'Fairy Grottoes'. These same geologists are also responsible for the names 'Fairy Tale Dome' and 'Grail Castle', which refer to the two most famous formations in the Saalfeld underworld.



### Therese's wedding.

Born in Thuringia, Therese of Saxe-Hildburghausen did not have it easy in Munich. In 1810, she married the crown prince Ludwig I of Bavaria, who was a strict Catholic and repeatedly tried to turn her from her Protestant beliefs. Although she remained Protestant, she was well liked by the people.

To this day, Queen Therese is considered to be the virtuous, charitable mother of Bavaria. Named after her, Theresienstrasse is an upmarket street in Munich. And once a year, millions of tourists swarm the Bavarian capital, joining the locals on the Theresienwiese to celebrate the anniversary of the imperial wedding. These days, very few realise that this is the historical occasion behind Oktoberfest in Munich. The fact that the event is lacking in sophistication should not be seen as an offence against the crown, as things have changed very little since 1810: a non-commissioned officer came up with the idea of holding a horse race in front of the city gates. The citizens' militia saw the race as an opportunity for a celebratory shooting competition, with the two events attracting 30,000 people. There was food and drink and everyone had a good time. Since 1990, the year of reunification, Hildburghausen has also been celebrating the memory of the queen. Today, Theresienfest is one of the most popular events in southern Thuringia.





Where life and passion have a tradition.

## Sputtering bird.

It stinks, it's loud and it's a cult hit: the Schwalbe, German for 'swallow', is a moped manufactured in Suhl, East Germany. Although production stopped in the mid-1980s, the robust mopeds still sputter and roam the streets of Germany – these days in the West, too. There are more than 30 fan clubs throughout Germany. Based in Suhl, Simson was the manufacturer of the Schwalbe and once an internationally successful company in motor sport. Simson built top-notch mopeds and named them after birds, including the sparrow, sparrowhawk and goshawk.

Simson manufactured 1.2 million Schwalbe mopeds in two decades. And since the summer of 2011, it has been experiencing a comeback – as an eco-friendly electric moped. efw-suhl GmbH is developing the e-Schwalbe, which is set to roll off the assembly lines in the middle of 2012.



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Europe helps to keep Thuringian history alive by supporting cultural and artistic monuments such as the Goethe and Schiller archive in Weimar, Meiningen Theatre and the Saalfeld Fairy Grottoes. And by promoting economic and research development, the expansion of university resources and computers at schools, it ensures that success stories can also be written here in the future.